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Mr. SIMMONS's
SERMON
ON THE
DEATH
OF
Dr. *William Gay.*

[REDACTED]

MR. SIMMONS

SERMON



DEATH

OF

DR. WILLIAM GUNTER

[REDACTED]

The Sovereignty and Equity of
GOD's CHOICE.

A
SERMON

P R E A C H E D

At Stepney, January the 30th 1703.

And since Enlarged :

Occasion'd by the

D E A T H
O F
WILLIAM GAY, M. D.

Who Departed this Life. Jan. 25th

By **THOMAS SIMMONS.**

*Where is the Wise ? Where is the Scribe ? — Hath not
God made Foolish the Wisdom of this World ? 1
Cor. I. 20.*

*I thank Thee, O Father — because thou hast hid
these things from the Wise and Prudent, and hast
revealed them unto Babes. Even so, Father, for so
it seemed good in thy sight, Mat. 11. 25. 26.*

LONDON, Printed, and are to be Sold by
T. Parkhurst, at the Bible and Three Crowns in
Cheapside ; N. Hiller over against St. Mary Axe in
Leaden-Hall-street, and T. Shelmerdine, over
against the Pump in Little Britain. MDCCLIV.

The Government and People of
GOD'S CHOICE

SERMON

PREACHED

At St. James' Church, New York,
on the 1st of January, 1841.

By the Rev. Mr. [Name]

DEATH



By Thomas [Name]

Printed by [Name]

London: Printed and sold by
T. Pugh, at the sign of the Crown, in
St. James' Church-yard, New York,
on the 1st of January, 1841.

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St. James' Church-yard, New York,
on the 1st of January, 1841.

**To my Worthy FRIEND,
Mrs. MARY GAY.**

MADAM,

THE following Discourse had not seen the Light but in compliance with the Will of the Dead, and your super-added Desire.

Tho' I must confess, the having an Opportunity to give the World some Taste of his excellent Spirit, and to propose him as one who was a living Instance of the Power of Godliness, in this Atheistical and degenerate Age, makes me unwilling that such Worth shou'd be concealed; and the rather, if there has been any Efforts made by ill Instruments, to weaken his Character as a Good Man, and strike at his Virtue where his Defence was so strong.

And think not Madam, such Treatment strange: When our LORD himself, for his innocent Freedom, could not escape

escape the Reproach of Tongues, no wonder if his Disciples bear their part in Calumny too.*

We live in an Age wherein Men are very severe in censuring others, but remiss in charging themselves; and can fancy they see Motes in their Brothers Eye, when they discern not the Beams that are in their own.†

I have not attempted to set off the ensuing Sermon, in an Artificial Dress, or with the Wisdom of Man's Words, suited to the Airy Genius of the Times, but have rather chosen to make use of the Sword of the SPIRIT, the Word of GOD, in Encountering pernicious and hurtful Errors, that drown Men in Perdition, and do as effectually damn as ill Morals. And were Scripture Arguments more urged, there wou'd be a greater probability of reaching the Consciences of Gain-sayers, than by all the fine spun Reasonings of Fleshly Wisdom.

I have forbore any thing, that might justly be deemed an undue Reflection, upon any Profession of Wise and Learned Men; being willing not to provoke, but

** Mat. 11. 19. † Mat. 7. 4.*

to win; or if to provoke, it should only be to consider their danger, that they are set in slippery places. Their intellectual Accomplishments may betray them to their Ruin, and the Reasonings of Fleshly Wisdom (if not kept under a Guard) will expose to the extreamest Hazards.

Its comfortable, Madam, for You, and surviving Relations, to reflect upon those singular Endowments, with which the Deceased was Blessed; and with all that shining Humility that Graced his Accomplishments; together with that warm Zeal, in the Cause of God, and the Interests of Revealed Religion, that discover'd it self. Tho' he might have made as great Pretensions to Reason, and was stock'd with as large a share of intellectual Improvements, as the most, who are for Deifying their Reasons, and paying Obedience to their own Performances, yet he always paid a profound deference to the Revealed Will of God, and did not only bow his own Reason to that, but did very much lament the Swervings of (otherwise) ingenious Minds from the Rule of the Word. And it was his great trouble, to see with what

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a Gust, Error was imbibed, how fast Infection did spread it self, and how prevailing pernicious Doctrines not only Unscriptural, but subversive of the Scriptures, were.

But pardon me, if here I no farther recount his Excellencies, lest I should Wound, instead of Healing, and add to your Grief, when I ought rather to allay it.

That you may learn to live above every discouragement; that you may shew, by an humble Acquiescence in divine Disposals, you did not grudge God the Mercy he has removed; but rather do rejoice that you had such a Mercy to resign: That you may believe his Promise which you have once already found to be true, and are again called to act Faith in; that God will be a Husband to the Widow, and also give you a Name better than of Sons and Daughters, is the unfeigned Desire and Prayer of

M A D A M,

**Your Obliged Friend,
and Servant in the
Work of the Ministry,**

THO. SIMMONS.

A

Funeral Sermon

On the DEATH of

Dr. WILLIAM GAY.

1 COR. I. part of the 26th Verse.

— *Not many Wise Men after the Flesh,*
— *are called.*

IN the Great Business of Man's Salvation, there are *Two things*, among others, wherein the *Wisdom* of the *Flesh*, doth Confront the *Wisdom* of God: The *First*, respects the *Way* and *Method* that God takes in the *Saving* of Men; The *Second*, the *Objects* that are Chosen and Called to this *Salvation*. And our *Apostle* in this *Chapter* takes notice of both these *Cases*.

1. *The Wisdom of the Flesh is apt to Confront the Wisdom of God, in the Way and Method he takes of Saving Men.* This the *Apostle* Insinuates in the 21. v. For after that, in the *Wisdom of God*, the *World* by

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Wisdom knew not God; it pleased God by the Foolishness of Preaching (that which Wise Men after the Flesh reputed and esteemed such) to Save them that Believe. What kind of Preaching this was, that was so efficacious, and yet so despised; the Apostle informs us in the 17th, and 18th verses. It was a Preaching the Gospel, not with Wisdom of Mans Words, lest the Cross of Christ should be made of none Effect; but a Preaching of the Cross which, to them that Perished, was accounted Foolishness, but to them that were Saved, it was the Power of God. The Apostle goes on in the 23d v. to Treat of that general Opposition that this kind of Preaching met with, both from Jew and Gentile. *We Preach Christ Crucified, to the Jews a Stumbling Block and to the Greeks Foolishness.* But to prevent mistakes, he Anticipates an Objection in the 24th v. *Unto them which are called, both Jews, and Greeks, Christ the power of God, and the Wisdom of God, (q. d.)* Dont mistake me, as tho' I asserted, that all the Jews Stumbled at a Christ Crucified, or all the Greeks accounted the Preaching of Christ Crucified Foolishness; No, there were some, both of Jews and Greeks, to whom he was the Power of God, and the Wisdom of God, i. e. they saw that both the Power and the Wisdom of God, did shine forth in Christ Jesus, and were Illustriously Display'd in the Methods of Salvation, in and through him. And then the Apostle proceeds in the 25th v. to prove that how-
ever

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ever the *Wise Men* of the World might Judge the Way of God, in the saving of Souls to be *Foolishness*, that God did herein far out-doe all the *Wisdom* of the World. And those very Dispensations, which the *Wisdom of the Flesh* was apt to Impeach, as *Weak* and *Foolish*, God wou'd make it Evident, that there was in them a Display of more *Wisdom* and *Might* than ever the *Flesh*, or the *Wise men* after it, were Masters of.

And to Convince these Corinthians hereof, he appeals to their own Knowledge, and Sense and Experience of things, in the verse of my Text. *For you see YOUR Calling Brethren.* By that *Preaching*, which the World accounts *Foolishness*, you have been called and brought over to the *Faith* of Christ. What *Moral Swasion* and the *Wisdom* of the *Flesh*, with all its *Reasonings* cou'd not do, that the Preaching of the Cross of Christ has done: Wherein those Methods proved *Weak*, and ineffectual; this way of God was *Powerful* and *Prevailing*.

Thus the Apostle removes all just Ground of Caviling as to the way of God, in bringing home Sinners to himself by the Preaching of the Cross of Christ.

2. *The Wisdom of the Flesh, is apt to Confront the Wisdom of God, as to the Objects whom he chuseth, and calls to Salvation.* Those who will be accounted *Men of Reason* and *Thought*, are forward enough, many times, to give their sense of things, after this manner. "That the *Persons* fittest to be Chosen,

“ and Called of God, are the *Wise*, and the
 “ *Prudent*, the *Great* and the *Honourable*
 “ Persons of *Name*, *Worth*, *Reputation*, and such
 “ as make a *Figure* in the *World*, as being the
 “ likeliest Persons, to be an Honour to Reli-
 “ gion, and advance the Designs of God’s
 “ Glory : But when, instead of such being
 Chosen and called, they see the *Mean*, the
Vile and the *Contemptible*, are generally
 pitched upon, to share in the *Salvation* of
 God, and are oftimes the greatest promoters
 of the Designs of God’s Glory ; they are
 apt to be offended.

Now the Apostle, in my Text, and fol-
 lowing Verses, offers somewhat to remove
 this Offence. He owns, that not *many*
Wise Men after the *Flesh*, not *many* *Mighty*,
 not *many* *Noble* are called ; but yet, God
 would not lose his *Glory*, nor be Frustra-
 ted in his designs, For God hath chosen the
Foolish things of the *World*, to Confound the
Wise— and the *Weak things* of the *World*, to
 Confound the things which are *Mighty* : And
base things of the *World*, and things which are
 despised, hath God chosen, yea, and things
 which are not to bring to Nought, things that
 are, that no *Flesh* shou’d *Glory* in his Pre-
 sence.

In the Words, we have these Two parts.

1. *A priviledge recogniz’d ; Ye see your*
Calling. Tho’ the preaching of Christ, is
 ordinarily to the Jews a *Stumbling Block*,
 and

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and to the Greeks Foolishness, it has had other kind of Influence upon you, whereas, you might have stumbled, and have been Offended, as well as others.

2. *A Specification of the peculiarity and distinguishingness of it. How that not many Wise Men after the Flesh, not many Mighty, not many Noble are called.* By viewing Persons of a higher Rank, and Order than your selves, who generally fall short of this Calling; you may hence see how distinguishing the Goodness, and Grace, and Love of God to you-wards is.

Three Ranks, or Orders of Persons are here mention'd; the *First* of which, is that which at present, we principally intend to Consider. And we shall offer the *Proposition* in no other view but this,

DOCTRINE.

There are but few of the Wise Men after the Flesh, that are Efficaciously, and Savingly Called.

So great has been the Veneration, and Esteem, paid to the *Memories* of those that have been reputed *Wise Men*, that differing Countries have strongly contested for the places of their Birth; and those that could make the *Clearest Pretensions*, have mightily valued themselves, as breathing in the same Air, and being born in the same place.
But

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But that which will serve to recommend us to Men, will not recommend us to the Almighty. For that which is highly esteemed among men, is (oftimes) an Abomination in the sight of God, Luke 16. 15.

In the Prosecution of the Truth before us, we shall pursue this following

M E T H O D.

- I. Give you the Notion of a WISE MAN after the FLESH.
- II. Enquire what that CALLING is, that is generally denied to WISE MEN after the FLESH.
- III. Exemplifie and Illustrate the TRUTH of the PROPOSITION from Scripture Instances.
- IV. Offer something to Vindicate the proceedings of the Great God in (frequently) passing by, and not Calling the WISE MAN after the FLESH.
- V. And LASTLY, Make some Practical Improvement on the Whole.

I. We shall state the Notion of a WISE MAN after the FLESH.

And he may be Consider'd under a more Gross, or under a more refin'd Character.

1. Under a more Gross Character. And then, a Wise man after the Flesh, is a corrupt, sensual,

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sensual, Worldly Minded Man. One whose Wisdom principally refers to, and centres in, the mean and low, and perishing things of this present Life. One that is subtle, and Crafty for the World, and (possibly) sticks not at indirect Measures, provided they have their Subserviency to promote his Earthly and Covetous designs, and is well versed, in the Wicked Arts and practices, of *going beyond, and defrauding others.* (a) You have his Character in few Words. Jer. 4. 22. He is *Wise to do Evil,* but to do good he has no Knowledge. Or as the Apostle speaks, Phil. 3. 19. He is One whose End is Destruction, whose God is his Belly, whose Glory is in his Shame, who **MIND-ETH EARTHLY THINGS.**

2. We may Consider him Under a more refined Character. And so it may denote a Person of great Natural Endowments and Moral Acquirements. One that exceeds the common Level in Capacity, and is esteem'd an Intelligent, Knowing, Judicious and Discerning Man. The Jews had such in high repute, and used more especially to esteem of those, that were the Teachers and Expounders of their Law, as *Wise Men.* And in other Nations, those that have been Skill full in the Learning of the Times, have been accounted such. Hence *Moses* was deservedly looked upon as a *Wise Man*, according to the Notion of the Times, because he was

(a) 1 Thes. 4. 6.

Learned

Learned in all the Wisdom of the Egyptians, Acts 7. 22. This Wise Man after the Flesh, (if we consider him under a Complex, and Comprehensive Notion) is one whose Natural Abilities are more than common, who for quickness, and sharpness of Parts, exceeds the most; and to add to his Character, is well furnished with all necessary Human Literature; one, who can, upon the Stock he has, make considerable Improvements sometimes in tracing the *Footsteps of Nature*, or in prying into Maxims of *State*, or pursuing *Nice and Curious Speculations* in one Kind or Faculty, or another; and is capable to resolve many of those Phenomena's which are meer Riddles to others, and to talk with some Consistency upon those points, which to the Vulgar appear abstruse and knotty; but doth all the while rest in those Improvements that do meerly result from Nature's stock, and those other helps he has, without being inquisitive after Divine, and Spiritual, and Saving Knowledge. He is taken up with *Nature* and Human Accomplishments, so as to forget the *God of Nature*: Or, however, is satisfy'd with those Notices, that he can attain unto in a *Rational* way, and neglecting *Revelation*, is for forming and moduling his Thoughts and Notions of Divine Things, according to the *Scantling* of his own narrow Conceptions. And if, perhaps, he be misled in his *Reasoning*, and argues falsely, and inconsistently with the *Revelation* of God, (which is a common case:)
yet

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yet he pays such a deference to his own Sentiments, as to adhere to these, rather than be guided by the *Mind* and declared *Will* of the most HIGH. Hence the Apostle expressly saith, Rom. 8. 7. The *Carnal Mind*, *φρόνημα τῆς σαρκός*, the *Wisdom of the Flesh* is *Enmity against God*. And herein it shews it self, in pursuing *Fleshly Reasonings*, tho' they run *Counter* to the *Informations* of the *Word*. Thus, you have the *Character* of a *Wise Man after the Flesh*, One that is *meerly* and *only* so.

We proceed to a *Second General*.

II. We shall next Enquire *what that CALLING is which is generally denied to WISEMEN after the FLESH.*

There is an *outward and common Calling*, and there is an *inward and special Calling*.

1. *There is an outward and common Calling.* This our Lord speaks of, *Mat. 22. 14.* *Many are called and few chosen.* This *Call* is so general as to reach and concern all that are within the *Sound of the Gospel*. And in this sense, there are *many Wise Men* after the *Flesh* that are *Called*, even all that are where the *Gospel* is *Preached and Published*. But then,

2. *There is an inward and special Calling.* And this the *Text* intends. Not a *Call* to the *Apostleship*; or to the *Ministry*, which some in the first times of the *Gospel* had extraordinary *Calls* to undertake. This is not the *Calling* that the *Apostle* speaks of, for he speaks of a *Calling* that the *Church* or whole *Body of Believers*, at *Corinth*
C were

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were interested in, *ye see your Calling Brethren*. But this *inward* and *special Calling* that he speaks of, he means, of the powerful Operation of the Divine Spirit upon the Heart, setting home the outward Call and Invitation of the Gospel, and working a suitable disposition, corresponding to the Tenour and Design of the outward Call. For instance, the Call and Invitation of the Gospel is to *bewail and forsake Sin*. *Mat. 3. 2. Repent ye, for the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand*. Accordingly, the Blessed Spirit makes this Call Effectual, by working a penitential Frame and Disposition in the Heart. *A new Spirit will I put within you—and I will give you an Heart of FLESH. Ezek. 36. 26. i. e.* an humble, pliable, tender, impressible Heart.

Again, the Gospel invites to *Faith* in our Lord Jesus Christ, and to an Hearty Reception, and Acceptance of him. *John 6. 29. This is the Work of God, (a Work pleasing and acceptable to him, and that which he enjoyns) that ye Believe on him whom God has sent*. And this Faith which the Gospel invites unto, the Good Spirit works in the Heart: It is one special Branch of his Workmanship, and the Fruit of his Indwelling. *He dwelleth with you, and shall be in you, John 14. 17*. And then in the 19th v. you have the Effects hereof—*The World seeth me no more, but ye see me. i. e. ye believe on me, and that because the Spirit of Truth dwelleth with you and in you*.

Again, the Gospel calleth and invites to Holiness and unblameableness of Life and Conversation,

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versation. Tit. 2. 11, 12. *For the Grace of God (i. e. the Gospel of Grace) that bringeth Salvation, hath appeared to all men, teaching us, that denying all Ungodliness and Worldly Lusts, we shou'd live Soberly, Righteously, and Godly in this present World.* Now, answerable to this outward Call, the Holy Ghost imparts that Grace to the Heart, which brings forth the Fruits of Righteousness in the Life and Conversation. God promiseth therefore, Ezek. 36. 27. *I will put my Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my Statutes, and ye shall keep my Judgments, and do them.* This work of the Spirit of God is elsewhere spoken of under the notion of God's putting his Law in the inward parts, and writing it in the Heart. Jer. 31. 33. And it is called a Law, because of the Correspondency and Answerableness of the New Creature, in its bent motion and tendency to the Law without: That as Face answers Face in the Glass, such a harmony is there between the Law without, and the inward tendency and disposition of the renewed Soul, so far as renewed, and form'd, and fashioned by the Divine Spirit.

You see then, what this *inward and special Call* is, and this is that which is ordinarily denied to *wise men* after the *Flesh*. They are generally Strangers to the Great Work of the Spirit of God upon the Heart, moulding and fashioning it unto an obediential Conformity to the Calls of the Word, and know but little what *Repentance towards God* and *Faith in our Lord Jesus Christ*, as to the Truth,

III. *To Exemplifie and Illustrate the TRUTH*
of the PROPOSITION from Scripture Instances.

Under the Jewish Oeconomy, even in that short account that we have of learned men, we find, that among those that made pretensions to Wisdom, there were great numbers who were of unhallowed and un sanctified Lives, and such as were utter Strangers to this Divine Calling.

That great Politician, in *David's* time, *Ahitophel*, of whose Sagacity and Wisdom, *David* dreaded the Consequences when he join'd in the Conspiracy with *Absalom*, and was forced to betake himself to God, to turn the Council of *Ahitophel* into Foolishness; (a) yet this *Ahitophel* was but an ill man, as may be gather'd from his siding with *Absalom*, the villainous council he gave him, and the *Exit* that he made.

If we look to the *Priests*, and those employed in *Holy things*, of whom the Scriptures speak more than of any other Order of men, we shall find among these, numbers of those, who notwithstanding their pretensions to Wisdom, and the Sacred Tyes of their Function, were Strangers to this Calling.

In *Eli's* time, what profligate Wretches were his Son, tho employ'd in the *Priests* office! Infomuch that *they made the Offer-*

(a) 2 Sam. 15. 31.

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ing of the Lord to be abhorred, 1 Sam. 2. 17.

In the times of the Kings, how did the Priests and Leaders of the People, generally revolted from God? Sometimes bowing the Knee to *Baal*, (a) at other times falling down before other *Graven Images*, the *Gods* of the Heathens, *Wood* and *Stone*. (b) And so great was their Influence, and so prevailing their Example, that they drew the generality of the People into the same Idolatry with themselves. (c) And after Gospel-Light began to break forth, with a greater Evidence and Power, the fiercest Opposition, that our Lord and his Doctrine met with, was from those that were reputed *Wise Men*. Inſomuch that when the Officers returned, without having apprehended Christ, (having ſome Convictions upon their Minds that he was ſome Extraordinary and Divine Perſon) the insolent *Phariſees* Glory in this, That few, or none of the Rulers of the *Jews* and of the *Phariſees* Believed on him. John 7. 48.

Have any of the Rulers? Alas! — They were generally ſo blinded with a Conceit of their devout and deeper Learning, that they rejected the Councils of Chriſt againſt themſelves, and the very Publicans and Harlots entred into the Kingdom of God before them.

Mat. 21. 31. Nay, ſo inveterate was their Malice, that they not only perſeveringly rejected Chriſt's Doctrine, but they hunted

(a) 1 Kings 18. 9. (b) *Hof.* 4. 8, 9. (c) *Jer.* 50. 6. *Hof.* 4. 12, 13.

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after his Blood, and were not satisfied till they had brought their Bloody Designs to a Maturity, and Crucified the Preacher as well as reviled his Doctrine.

When the Gospel came to be carried to the Gentiles, we find that among them, the Wise and Prudent were generally the backwardest to the giving it a becoming Entertainment. At *Athens* (the then *Emporium*, and most Famous Seat of Learning in the whole World) how do the wise men there vilifie the great Doctrines of the Gospel, and ridicule the Preacher thereof. *Acts* 17. 18, 32. And the Apostle departs from thence without any great success, only one *Dionysius an Areopagite*, and a Woman named *Damaris*, v. 34. were savingly wrought upon.

These were Persons of some Fame, that clave to him, but the rest, that were effectually Called, were Persons of a meaner Figure. These few Instances may serve to elucidate, or set this Truth before us in a clear Light.

IV. *We shall Offer something to vindicate Divine Proceedings in (frequently) passing by, and not calling the WISE MEN after the FLESH.*

And it might be enough to Alledge the Sovereign Will, and good pleasure of God as a sufficient Reason to Justifie such a Proceedure. It might be enough to say, it is his Will. And herein we shou'd but follow the

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the Unerring Example of our Blessed Lord, who resolves this Transaction of God into his meer Sovereignty, *Mat. 11. 25, 26. I Thank thee, O Father, Lord of Heaven and Earth, because thou hast hid these things from the WISE and PRUDENT, and hast Revealed them unto Babes.* Even so Father, for so it seemed Good in thy sight: He is not accountable for any of his Matters. (a) He hath Mercy on whom he will have Mercy, and whom he will he hardneth. (b) Can he be supposed Unjust, in denying that Grace which none have deserved? And which, whenever it is dispensed, it is freely given: All have sinned, and do deserve to dye; and what if God willing to shew his Mercy, makes known the Riches of his Glory, on the Vessels of Mercy, which he had afore prepared unto Glory? Who art thou, O Man, that repliest against God? (c) The Wind bloweth where it listeth—so is every one that is born of the Spirit, John 3. 8.

To some, God affords the *External Call*, and denies it to Others. Some have the *Outward Means*, and no more; others are made to partake of an *Inward, Saving Operation* accompanying, and attending the *Outward Means*. Some hear the *Word*, others the *Spirit* in the *Word*. Some feel the striking of the Air upon the *Ear*, (they Enjoy the Sound of the Gospel) but others feel the Stamp, and receive the Impression of the Spirit upon the *Heart*. That one rough Stone,

(a) *Job 33. 13.* (b) *Rom. 9. 18.* (c) *Rom. 9. 23, 20.*
shou'd

shou'd be hewn, and polished, and framed into a *Statue*, while others, as fit, lie neglected in the *Quarry*, is meerly owing to the pleasure of the *Statuary*. Or, to use the Apostle's Allusion, *The Potter has power over the Clay, of the same Lump, to make one Vessel unto Honour, and another unto Dishonour. Rom. 9. 21.* Why the Great God shou'd chuse and call *Abraham* out of his Countrey, and from his Kindred, and from his Father's House, and promise to make of him a great Nation, (a) rather than any other; Why *Jacob* shou'd be loved of God from the Womb, and Called rather than *Esau*; (b) Why the *People of Israel* shou'd be singled out from all other Nations and People, and be the Objects of a peculiar Care, and have the *Oracles of God* committed unto them; (c) What can all this be ascribed unto, but the Good Pleasure of God? *Eph. 1. 9. Having made known unto us the Mystery of his Will, according to his Good Pleasure, which he had purposed in himself.*

There's nothing but Death is Man's Due, that's his Wages, *Rom. 6. 23.* If he has any thing better, that's a Gift, To you it is given to know the mystery of the Kingdom of God. *Mark 4. 11.* Mayn't God then dispose of his own Gifts, as he pleaseth: And, if he thinks fit, to chuse the mean things of the World to a pitch of the highest

(a) *Gen. 12. 1, 2.* (b) *Mal. 1. 2, 3.* (c) *Psal. 147. 19, 20.*

Favour,

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Faour, and passes over those, that the World esteems most Excellent, who shall controul him? *Who has enjoined him his way* (saith *Elihu*) or who can say, thou hast wrought *Iniquity*? *Job* 36. 23. Who has any claim upon God? Or any demands to make? *If any man hath first given to him, it shall be recompensed to him again, Rom.* 11. 35. We must needs lay our Hands upon our Mouths and own that God is most Righteous, and Equitable, whenever he thinks fit to deny to any, (tho' never so well furnished with Human Wisdom) either *Grace* here, or *Glory* hereafter.

But to pass over this Mysterious and Awful, tho' Great *Truth*, and descend to some other Considerations that do highly justify the Proceedings of the Great God in passing by many *Wise Men after the Flesh*, when it may be the *Weak* and *Contemptible* are called.

First, God hereby gives a Testimony to his own All-sufficiency, and shews how little dependance he has on Creature-Instruments. He is always giving out, never receiving in, from his Creatures, any thing that can add to his Perfection, or Essential Glory. And in passing by the *Wise Men after the Flesh*, he intimates, that he is a self-sufficient Being, and that he can carry on his great Designs, and fulfil the Purposes and Councells of his own *Will*, without their Agency or Help.

When he had a Noble, and Glorious Design on foot, of spreading and Publish-
D ing

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ing the Everlasting Gospel up and down the World they were not the *Plato's*, the *Aristotle's*, the *Tullie's* of the day, but a few *Fishermen*, and *Others* of little Name and Character, that were pickt out to promote, and carry on this Blessed Design.

God many times chuses to set aside those (when he has some great work on Foot) that would arrogate to themselves, or in whom others might be apt to boast: And in the Business of *Effectual Calling*, in letting the Sceptre of his Grace pass over the *Wise* and *Prudent*, it shews that he can advance the Designs of his Grace, promote the Kingdom of his Son, raise up a Seed to serve him, without being beholden to them. And this may lead us to another Consideration,

Secondly. God herein takes the best Method to secure his own Glory, and the Honour of his free, and rich Grace. This the Apostle assigns as the Reason of God's passing by the *Wise*, and the *Mighty* and *Noble*, and chusing the *Foolish*, the *Weak*, and the *Base*, that no *Flesh* shou'd Glory in his Presence, and that he that Glorieth might Glory in the Lord. 1 Cor. 1. 29. 31. None shall have reason to say, because of my Great Gifts and Parts, therefore God called me; my Wisdom and Prudence and Skill, recommended me to a Divine Choice. No! In (ordinarily) choosing the Mean and the Vile, he takes away all
cause

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cause of Boasting. As it was said to *Israel*, with respect to the smallness of their number, that *God did not love them, because they were more in number than any People; (for they were the fewest People)* Deut. 7. 7. So it may be said with respect to all whom God chuseth and calls, that it was not for any inherent Worth, and Personal Excellency in them that God set his Love upon them. But to pass over these Considerations, that do more especially relate to the *Will* and *Pleasure* of God in Calling or not Calling of Persons, and come to speak of something in the *Creature*, that will justify God, and vindicate his Wisdom and Equity in the not calling many wise men after the Flesh. Therefore,

Thirdly, *God meets with strong Contradiction from the Carnal Mind, and oftentimes the fiercest opposition proceeds from, and the most inveterate Enmity is harbour'd in the Hearts of, the wise men after the Flesh.* They employ their *Wisdom* to stand it out against the *Calls* of God, and improve their *Wit*, to oppose themselves to the *most High*. This Opposition discovers it self with respect to the *Being*, the *Providence*, and the *Word* of God. Let us see a little of the malevolent Carriage of *Fleshly Wisdom* towards God in each respect.

First, As to the *Being* of God. Are there not many such *Fools* (tho' they wou'd be thought wise) who say in their Heart

there is no God? Psal. 53. 1. Nay, are we not cast in those latter days, wherein Atheistical, and Blasphemous Thoughts are entertain'd, not only in the Heart, but there are bare-faced Monsters who seek no Corners, that dare openly avouch their Disbelief of the Existence and Being of God. Who scorn to work under the covert of the Night, but in view and the open Day, foam out their Infidelity and Madness. *Their Tongue and their Doings are against the Lord, to provoke the Eyes of his Glory. The shew of their Countenance doth witness against them, and they declare their sin as Sodom and hide it not.* Isa. 3. 8, 9. Notwithstanding those cogent and incontestable Arguments for a Deity, which are suggested from the Holy Scriptures, and the Natural and Genuine Reasonings of sober Minds, yet they harden themselves against all Conviction, and shut their Eyes against clear Demonstration. And to such a pitch of Insolence are they arrived, that because they are (wilfully) *blind*, and have put out their own Eyes, deny that others see; and impudently explode the Notion of a *Deity*, as a melancholly Conceit, and the Effect of Credulity and Ignorance. And so opinionated are they of their own exquisite Knowledge, as to think that they may justly pretend to have engrossed the *Sense and Knowledge* of the times, and that none may pretend to *Wit*, if it ben't of their Strain.

They abuse their *Wisdom* to wage War
against

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against Heaven, and turn the Gifts of God into Weapons of Hostility against him. They willfully and sottishly stifle and smother the Notions, and endeavour to rase out those Impressions of a Deity that were stamp'd upon their Minds. What-ever their pretensions to Wit and Sense and Ingenuity may be; they barbarously attack the universally received *Notions* of Mankind, and pull down what has been Built up by the universal Suffrage of the whole *Rational* World.

They wou'd be accounted Men of Thought, and yet certainly they never allow themselves time to think freely, and unprejudiced, concerning an Infinite, and an Eternally Wise, and Intelligent Being; or else they might, wherever they look'd, within or without, behold him. *For the invisible things of him, from the Creation of the World, are clearly seen, being understood, by the things that are made, even his Eternal Power and Godhead; so that they are without Excuse.** There's that *Force*, and yet *Plaineſs*, in the Arguments drawn from the Subordination of Causes, that nothing but a wilful Blindness can resist and withstand. And every one that is not so Blinded must needs own, that the things which are seen cou'd not produce themselves; and if by some other, either that other has a self-sufficiency, and Infinite Fulness, or else that other was de-

* *Rom. i. 20.*

rivative and dependant, and received its Being from some other, so that then an higher Being is to be traced and sought after; and so upward, till at last we come up as high as to the first Cause of all things, whose Understanding is Infinite, *who has made the World and all things therein, in whom we live move and have our Being.* †

Now, no wonder that Persons of such a Complexion as the *Atheist* is, are uncalled, and when *Fleshly Wisdom* in any runs in this Vein, God is most Righteous in passing such by, and leaving them to their Eternal undoing. Can it be thought strange, that God shou'd deny such, a Place in *Heaven*, who used their feeble Malice on *Earth* in attempts to Dethrone him? Or, can we wonder, if he shou'd make them to *feel* what they wou'd not *believe*? Feel the Weight of his Wrath, who denied; and disown'd his Being. Surely, it is a Righteous thing with God to recompense Vengeance, and pour down his vindictive Fury on all such.

Secondly, As to the Providence of God. Here *Fleshly Wisdom* shews its Enmity. As some deny his *Being*, others his *Providence*, and will allow him no share, or but litle share, in the Government and Administration of Affairs in this lower World. There

† *Acts* 17. 24, 28.

are

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are various Pretences that are alledg'd for the vindicating such *Atheism* and *Infidelity*. They are chiefly reducible to these two, 1. *The Difficulties that do attend the Supposal of a Providence.* And 2. *The Disparagement they conceive to be to God, in the allowing of a Providence.*

1. *The Difficulties that do attend the supposal of a Providence. They know not how to Conceive of a Divine Agency over all, and in all.* But this *Difficulty* is in our *Minds*, not in God. For nothing can escape the *Notice* of God, whose *Understanding* is *Infinite*, and nothing can be an *Overmatch* for the *Power* of God, who can do all things. If it were not a Task too hard to make the *World*, why shon'd it be thought an impossible Task to *Rule* and *Govern* it? Is it not as easy with God, to *Guide* all things by the *Act* of his *Will*, as it was at first to *form* them by the *Command* of his *Word*.

Again, *The seemingly unequal distributions of Rewards and Punishments in this Life.* When it manytimes goes ill with the *Good* and the *Virtuous*, and well with the *Vitious* and *Wicked*; this makes them to conclude, that there is not a God that *Governs* in the *World*, but that all things come to pass *caco Impetu*, and not by an *All-seeing Deity*. Hence, the *Heathens* very frequently attributed the *Affairs* of *Life*, and the *Successes*, and *Disappointments* therein to *blind Chance*, and *Worshipped Fortune* as a *Deity*. But how inconclusive are *Arguments* against a *Providence* drawn from the unequal distributions

distributions of Rewards and Punishments. For God herein, gives the Wicked Space for, and a strong Motive to Repentance. Despisest thou the Riches of his Goodness and Forbearance, and Long-suffering, not knowing that the Goodness of God leadeth thee to Repentance, Rom. 2. 4. And if they misimprove this Divine Goodness, their present Enjoyments will be their Portion. And is it to be wondred at, if they are stored with the Good things of this Life, when it is all the Good they are ever likely to Enjoy. Son, remember that thou in thy Life time, receivedst thy Good things, Luke 16. 25.

And as to the Righteous, tho' they do meet with their cross Providences, yet all is in very Faithfulness, and every Affliction has a Blessing in it, and God will order all to work together for Good. And besides wait but a while, and those things that seem to be unnoticed and disregarded by Divine Providence, shall be strictly enquir'd into. And tho' here, there seems to be one Event to the Righteous, and to the Wicked, to the Good, to the Clean, and the Unclean, to him that Sacrificeth, and to him that Sacrificeth not, (a) yet hereafter, the Scene will be alter'd, and a very strict Scrutiny shall be made into all the Transactions of Human Life. For we must ALL appear at the Judgment Seat of Christ, that EVERY ONE may receive the things done in his Body, according to that

(a) Ecl. 9. 2.

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he hath done ; whether it be Good, or whether it be Evil. (b) Censure not Divine Proceedings, and let not the Argument of his Patience be improved to deny his Providence ; suffer him to exercise his Patience, and in the winding up of all things, he will display his Righteousness and strict Justice, and you shall see, that it shall go ill with the Wicked, (c) when verily, there is a Reward for the Righteous. (d)

2. *The Disparagement they conceive to be to God, in the allowing of a Providence. Some have taken in such mistaken Notions of Providence, that they apprehend the Employment too mean for the Great God, to be concerned in the Affairs of this World, especially the small and more trivial Concerns of it. As if it was a greater Disparagement to Govern, than it was at first to Create this Lower World. And as if the minutest, and most contemptible Creatures in our Eyes, might not as well be cared for, and marshall'd for Glorious Ends, as at first be produced for those Ends. And why mayn't he as well display his Providence in Preserving and Governing, as his Power in making those Creatures? The Sun in the Heavens doth not withhold his Influences from the meanest Creatures, and suffers the little Flies to sport themselves, in his Beams*

(b) 2 Cr. 5. 10. (c) Isa. 3. 11.

(d) Psal. 58. 10.

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and Rays, as well as the greatest *Princes*. This *Emanation* of Natural Goodness from the *Sun*, is but a Shadow, and faint Resemblance of the continual *Efflux* of Goodness from the Fountain thereof, God himself, for the Relief, Sustainment, and Government of *All*, even the *Meanest* of the Creation of God. His Creatures, he pronounced them *all Good, very Good*. (*Gen. 1. 31.*) And being so, a *God* of Goodness, will not account them beneath his Care and Notice.

Thirdly, As to the *Word* of God, here the Wisdom of the *Flesh* oftentimes shews its Enmity.

And that either *in denying the necessity and Authority of the Scriptures*, or, *in misinterpreting Scripture, and finding out ways to subvert the great Doctrines and Truths thereof*.

1. Some deny the *Necessity* and *Divine Authority* of the Scriptures. They deny the need of a Revelation, and deny that *Revelation* we have, to be the *Revelation* of God. This is the case of our *Deists*, who strike at all Revealed Religion, under pretences of advancing Natural Religion; tho' (I fear) if you trace them into their *Morals*, you will find them Strangers to *Natural*, as well as Enemies to that Religion that is *Revealed*.

It's matter of too common Observation, That the greatest Advocates for the Natural Power of Mankind about Spiritual things, (without being beholden to God,
to

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to unvail them, in the outward Revelation of the Gospel, or to enable them to receive and embrace them by the inward Efficacy of his Grace and Spirit) these have been the Persons that have made the least Progress in *Morality* and strict *Virtue*. They shall plead indeed, the mighty *Fears*, they are able to do; *If they have offended God, they are able to make him amends*; for they judge their *Sorrow and Repentance* to be a true and proper *Expiation of sin*. But if you should be at the pains to make your remark, you shall never discern them exercising that *Repentance* which they pretend to be so *Valuable*, and so *Meritorious*. For it is impossible that there should be in any a *Repentance after a Godly sort*, where this great *Evil* of vilifying and disowning the Scriptures, is not bewailed and repented of. And their *Sorrow*, can never be such, upon which they have any tolerable Ground to hope for *Pardon*, any more than a vile *Traitor*, that should tear in pieces his Prince's *Act of Grace*, and vilifie the *Terms* upon which *Pardon* is offer'd, should yet hope for *Mercy* at his hands. Must not such an one first *repent* of his *Insolence* towards the offer'd *Indulgence*, before he can possibly expect to be restored to *Pardon* and *Favour*.

The Gospel is the *Power of God to Salvation to every one that Believeth*, *Rom. 1. 16*. And if we despise this Gospel, how can we expect the *Displays of Divine*

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Power, and Grace for our Salvation: Where-
ever this Salvation is vouchsafed, there is
the exerting of a Divine Power; but then
this *Power* is convey'd in and through the
Gospel, so that no wonder that such Wise
Men after the Flesh are uncalled, and at
last perish.

2. Others misinterpret *Scripture*, and
find out ways to subvert the great
Doctrines, and the *Truths* thereof. Many
wise Men after the Flesh seem to pay a
Deference to the *written Word*, but they
come not to it, to be *informed*, and re-
ceive their *Notions* from it, but rather
bring their *Notions* to the *Word* and twist,
and turn *Scripture* till they fancy a Har-
mony in it to their own *Sentiments*,
and conceptions of things. Such a wretched
prevaricating, doth oftentimes discover it self,
in the Wise Men after the Flesh. And tho'
they dare not disown the *Word* of God,
yet by evading the Belief of the Great Im-
portant *Truths* of it, their Carriage doth
almost amount to a denial thereof.

We shall instance in some Particulars,
wherein *Fleshly Wisdom* is prone to discover
its Enmity to the *Word* in several momen-
tous *Doctrines* therein contained. As

(1.) *The Trinity of Persons in the Unity of the
Godhead.* This *Article* of our *Faith* (so necessary
to be *believed*, without which we can never
be let into right *Notions* of *Justification*
by the Righteousness of the Son of God
being

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being made Man, (a) or *Sanctification* by the Spirit of God, dwelling in our Hearts,) (b) the Wise Men after the Flesh are prone to oppose.

They can more easily digest the Doctrine of the *Unity* of the Godhead, because there is a contradiction in asserting *Two* Infinites, *Two* Almightyes, *Two* Supremeas, &c. but the *Trinity* of Persons in this *Unity*, they boggle at; tho' nothing more plain from the Word than that there are *Three* that bear record in Heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost; and these *Three* are *One*. 1 John 5. 7. And the Godhead of each Person is so frequently asserted, up and down the Sacred Volumes.

They are for measuring the Godhead and the Mode of Subsistence in each Person in the Sacred Trinity, by their own narrow and confined Understandings, and because they cannot comprehend the *Subsistence* of *Three* Persons in *one* undivided *Essence*, they presently conclude there is no such thing.

They would have proud Reason to set Bounds to the Divinity, and allow nothing to be True that transcends the Reach, and and is beyond the Grasp of their Conceptions. But whither will such a Principle drive Men, (if pursued) but into the very Dregs of *Atheism*? *Vain Man*, *Empty Man*, (as it is in the Margent) *would be wise*, Job 11. 12. Thou art but a drop of Being,

(a) Phil. 3. 9. (b) John 14. 17. 2 Thes. 2. 13.
and

and canst thou pretend to comprehend the immense *Ocean* and *Fountain* of *Being*. There's that in the *Creation*, so *Mysterious* as may put thee in mind of thy own *Emptiness* and *Ignorance*, and give a check to every *Exorbitancy*, so that thou shouldest not dare to bring down *God* and his *Mode* of subsistence, to thy shallow measure of conceiving; but rather humbly *acquiesce* in, and readily *Emertain* those *Revelations* and *Discoveries* he has been pleased to make of *himself* in his *Word*. Thou may'st look *lower* than thy self, and yet be *Non-plus'd*, and at a loss: No wonder if your Eyes dazle, and you can have no adequate and perfect Views when you look so *high* as *God*. Thou canst not comprehend how *God* shoud be *Three*, and yet *One*, what then? Is he evertheless so? There is not one *Attribute* in the *Godhead* that thou canst comprehend; wilt thou therefore dash out all the *Attributes* and *Perfections* of the *Divinity*?

Those *Perfections* in *God* we know the most of, do in their full latitude, infinitely Transcend our Knowledge. Because every Perfection has Infinity annexed to it: We can't comprehend his *Wisdom*, for his *Understanding* is *Infinite*. * But is he therefore evertheless the All-wise *God*? We can't understand his *Power*, How he *made* all things, how he preserves and upholds

* *Psal.* 147. 5.

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all things; is he therefore evertheless the Almighty God? (a) His *Immensity* is a Mystery to us; how he fills *Heaven* and *Earth*, and possesses Infinite Spaces beyond the Worlds that are made: But must we deny his *Immensity* and *Omnipresence* because we can't comprehend how he shou'd fill all things, and be every where present. (b) Why then, since upon the search into the Divine Attributes, we have reason to cry out Ω βάθος, O the depth of the Riches both of the Wisdom and Knowledge of God! Rom. 11. 33. and do lose our selves, in our contemplation; (so unsearchable and incomprehensible are they) why shou'd it be surprising and strange, that we cannot fathom, and fully understand this great Truth of Three Persons and yet but one God?

(2.) *The Divinity and Eternal Godhead of our Lord Jesus Christ.* They set up their own Wisdom, and indulge to their own Apprehensions of things, tho' hereby they keep off from all believing applications to the only Name given under Heaven among Men, whereby we must be Saved. (c)

The Jews, especially as to the Generality of *Fleshly Wise Men* among them, Gloried in their opposition to Christ, and those Doctrines that he deliver'd concerning himself as the *Messiah*, and Son of God. (as

(a) Rev. 15. 3. (b) Psal. 139. from 5. to 13.

(c) Acts 4. 12.

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in the forecited place) *John 7. 48. Have any of the Rulers and of the Pharisees believ'd on him.* And their dislike to his Doctrine discover'd it self, in the persecution of his Person, and the Cruelty they exercis'd towards him. They attempt to stone him, and what is the Reason they alledge? It was (they say) for Blaspheming: And wherein did they charge Blasphemy upon him? It was, in that *he being Man, made himself God.* *John 10. 33.* They cou'd not conceive, how he shou'd be *God* and *Man* too, and therefore rather than suspect their own Reasonings, they'll charge him with Blasphemy, and stone him rather than acknowledge their own Ignorance and Shallowness.

And it were to be wished, that this Perverseness and Enmity against *Christ* and his Eternal *Godhead*, were buried with those Jews: But alas! That wretched Spirit survives in many, that have the face to call themselves Christians; tho' one wou'd be prone to suspect, that they only assume the Christian Name, that their pernicious Designs, level'd against *Christ's Deity*, might be less suspected. And in some respects, they are unfaire *Adversaries* than their Predecessors, the *Jews*; Because, they'll pretend to own him to be *God*, but then only a Titular God, a made God, or however, one Inferiour to, and not equal in *Power* and *Glory* with the *Father*; and they want not confidence to wrest the Scriptures, and *Christ's own words*, concerning

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cerning his *Godhead*, to favour such an Interpretation; whereas the Jews apprehended Christ aright, and believed that when our Lord told them, that *He*, and the *Father* were *One*, John 10. 30. They understood him as meaning *ONE* in *ESSENCE* and *GLORY*; and when he declar'd himself to be the Son of God, they supposed him to lay claim to the same *Nature* with the *Father*, or why shou'd they go about to stone him. For if he had only own'd himself to be *God* in the same sense that Magistrates and Great Ones are said to be Gods, * in regard by Office they are God's *Vice-gerents*, where wou'd be the Blasphemy? And why shou'd they be so Incens'd, and Enraged against him? They apprehended him aright, as intending an Equality with the Father, and upon this Account, they preferred their charge of Blasphemy.

But we have a *Generation* of *Men* that are not so fair in the expounding of Christ's Words, as the Jews were: With their utmost Efforts they strike at his Godhead, and yet compliment him with the *Title* of *God* too.

(3.) *The Decrees of God, especially those that relate to the Eternal States of Men.* Here the *Wisdom* of the *Flesh* is prone to testify its Dislike. That God shou'd, pursuant of his *Councils*, and the wise *Purposes* of his *Will*, choose some Men to

* *Psal.* 82. 6.

Salvation,

Salvation, and pass by others; that there shou'd be any other difference between *Peter* and *Judas*, than this, That *Peter* made a better improvement of his *Free Will* than *Judas* did; they will by no means allow of. *Fleshly Wisdom* is not easily reconciled to so low a stoop, as to permit Man's *Will* to bow to the *Decree* of God, but rather the *Decree* must truckle to the *Will* of Man. And therefore if any *Decree* doth pass, relating to the Eternal States of these *Two*, it is only founded upon God's *Pre-science*, whereby he fore-saw the Faith and *Good Works* of the *One*, and at the same time, that the other wou'd be *Wicked* and *Vile*: And if this be true, that God can decree nothing otherwise than as he fore-sees, how his Creatures will act and dispose of themselves, where doth *Sovereignty* reside? In Man's *Will*, or in God? Since Divine Determinations must be Influenced, and Governed according as the *Will* of Man shall move or act.

There's so much of *Pride* in the Heart of Man, that he is naturally fond of arrogating to himself, tho' it be a detracting from the Great God. And tho' the Nature of the thing doth plead, that when all were involved in the legall Curse, and lay exposed to Divine Wrath, God shou'd have the *Liberty* to chuse, whom he pleased to make *Vessels of Mercy*, since all deserved to be made *Vessels of Wrath*; and tho' the Scriptures do so plainly assert the Eternal States

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States of Men to be under a Divine Determination; how hard is it to perswade the proud Heart, and a prejudiced Mind, into the belief thereof.

Tho' the Scriptures speak of some that were *Ordained to Eternal Life*,* and others that were *Ordained of Old to Condemnation*: Of some that were *chosen to Salvation*,† and others *given over to their own Hearts Lusts*,|| whose end is *Destruction*; (a) yet the *Wisdom* of the Flesh, and the proud Heart of Man, knows not how to entertain these Truths.

(4.) *Justification through the imputed Righteousness of Christ, apprehended and received by Faith alone.* How common is it for the *Wise Men* after the Flesh to contradict and oppose this important Truth? Pride prompts Men to look to themselves, and not to another, for Righteousness; and *Fleshly Wisdom* is oftentimes employed in raising Arguments to encourage them to trust to their own *Doings*, tho' it be to their utter *Undoing*: As it was in the case of the *Israelites*, which followed after the *Law of Righteousness*, but they did not attain to the *Law of Righteousness*. Wherefore, because they sought it not by *Faith*, but as it were by the *Works of the Law*: For they stumbled at that *stumbling Stone*. Rom. 9. 30, 31.

* *Acts* 13. 48. † *Jude* 4. || *Psal.* 81. 11.

(a) *Phil.* 3. 19.

There's the same *Judaizing Spirit* still *Reigns*, and *Reigns* most among the *Wise Men after the Flesh*, who do ordinarily most regret, a being beholden to *Christ* and his *Righteousness* for pardon and acceptance to *Eternal Life*.

They'll own (possibly) that they are beholden to *Christ*, for the *wholesomeness* of his *Precepts*, the *Purity* of his *Life*, and the *Instructiveness* of his *Example*; nay, some will go further, and own an *Obligation* to *Christ* for procurement too, in regard (they judge) he has obtained thus much, that their *Righteousness* (tho' imperfect) shall be as *acceptable* to *God*, and as *pleadable* to *Eternal Life*, as tho' it were a perfect *Righteousness*; and their *Obedience*, if *sincere*, they may upon that, and for that, challenge *Heaven* as much as *Adam* could have done, had he persisted in his *Integrity*, and fulfill'd the *Conditions* of the *Covenant* of *Works*. But when they come to be told, that their own *Righteousness* won't justify, and their *sincere Obedience*, (tho' to be performed) must be rejected in point of *dependance*, and *Christ's Righteousness* must be imputed to us, and through that only we can be accepted of the *Father*, and that we have no other available *Plea*; here it is that their proud *Natures* recoil, and they can't brook the thoughts of being made and accounted *Righteous* in the *Righteousness* of another. Tho' their own *Righteousness* be but as *filthy Rags*, they don't
care

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care to quit it for the *white Robes* of Christ's *Righteousness*. Tho' there be enough in the best Actions of their Lives, to make them ashamed, and enough to incur Divine Displeasure, (unless those Actions are Hallowed, and Sanctified by the *Blood* of Christ) yet they care not to quit their pretensions, and cast themselves wholly on a Redeemer's Merit. They chuse to trust to rotten *Props*, to lay the stress of their weight upon broken *Reeds*, to Build upon a *Sandy Foundation* rather than cast themselves upon Christ, who is the *End of the Law for Righteousness*, to every one that Believeth, Rom. 10. 4.

(5.) *The Residence and inhabitation of the Spirit of God in Believers.* Here the *Wise Men* after the *Flesh* are oft puzzled and at a loss.

They look upon Lectures, treating of this matter, as *Cant* and *Enthusiasm*; *Scripture Authority* is waved by them, or at least the force of those Scriptures that Establish this Truth, is evaded. What more plain and full than John 14. 16, 17. *He shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever, even the Spirit of Truth,—for he DWELLETH with you, and shall be IN you.* So Rom. 8. 11. *If the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the Dead DWELL in you, (the Apostle takes it for granted, that he did Dwell in them, and hence draws his conclusion from the premises:)* But how many are imposed upon, from one single false Principle? viz. *That they are to believe*

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no further than they can comprehend, and because they know not how to conceive of the Spirits indwelling in the Heart, therefore they deny the Fact: And the rather, when they themselves are strangers to the Experimental part of Religion, and know nothing of the Quickning, Sanctifying, Comforting Influences of the Divine Spirit, they'll deny that others Feel that, which their own Experience falls short of.

(6.) The Resurrection of the Body at the last Day. Here's another Mystery that Fleshly Wisdom cannot well grasp, and many wise and prudent know not how to digest.

The Doctrine of the Resurrection, in the first propagation and spreading of it by the Apostles, met with great opposition from the SAGES, and those that wou'd be thought the WISE MEN of the Day. The Epicureans and Stoicks, with what Rudeness and Insolence do they attack the Apostle Paul, for advancing this Truth, Acts 17. 18. They Enountred him, and some of them said what will this B A B L E R say? Other some, he seemeth to be a Setter forth of strange Gods, because he Preached unto them Jesus, and the RESURRECTION.

There is the like Ridiculing Spirit remaining, and the Asserters and Preachers of the Mysteries of the Gospel, are looked upon, but as vain Bablers. But as to the Matter in hand; It seems to many, a thing incredible, that God should raise the Dead. (a)

(a) Acts 26. 8.

And

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And whence is it? But because they know not how to Comprehend it: *They can't conceive how a putrid Carcass, that has long been the Receptacle of Corruption and the Worm, and is resolved into Particles of Dust and Earth; shou'd be raised up a far more Glorious Body than it was before; (for this Mortal shall put on Immortality, and this Corruptible shall put on Incorruption.)* 1 Cor. 15. 53. And therefore, since the *Thing* it self is difficult to conceive of, they deny there shall be any such *Thing*. If they shou'd act so, as to things within view, (which, as to matters of Fact are indisputable, tho' the manner of performance be to us incomprehensible) they wou'd deserve to be hissed at for their pains.

Let us take the Instance of the Apostle's, which is very apt to our present Purpose, (1 Cor. 15 36.—) He is there speaking of a *Grain of Corn* cast into the *Earth*, which tho' it must *Rot* and *Dye*, shall *Quicken* and *Spring up* again, and bring forth a *Stalk* and *Ear*, after its kind. Annual experience wou'd be a confutation of any Cavillings against the possibility and reality of the Fact. How unlikely soever a *Grain of Corn* is, rotting and dying in the *Earth*, to rise again to advantage in the *Blade* and *Ear*, yet so it is; we may averr the same concerning these Bodies, that must be sown in Dishonour, that they shall spring up, and rise again, tho' we are in the *dark*, as to the *Quomodo*, how these Bodies shall be Raised, yet as to the thing it self, it is
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no further than they can comprehend, and because they know not how to conceive of the Spirits *indwelling* in the *Heart*, therefore they deny the *Fact*: And the rather, when they themselves are strangers to the *Experimental* part of Religion, and know nothing of the *Quickning*, *Sanctifying*, *Comforting* Influences of the Divine Spirit, they'll deny that others *Feel* that, which their own *Experience* falls short of.

(6.) *The Resurrection of the Body at the last Day.* Here's another Mystery that *Fleshly Wisdom* cannot well grasp, and many wise and prudent know not how to digest.

The Doctrine of the *Resurrection*, in the first propagation and spreading of it by the Apostles, met with great opposition from the SAGES, and those that wou'd be thought the WISE MEN of the Day. The *Epicureans* and *Stoicks*, with what *Rudeness* and *Insolence* do they attack the Apostle Paul, for advancing this Truth, *Acts* 17. 18. They *Encountred* him, and *some of them said what will this B A B L E R say?* Other some, he seemeth to be a Setter forth of *Strange Gods*, because he *Preached unto them Jesus, and the RESURRECTION.*

There is the like *Ridiculing Spirit* remaining, and the Asserters and Preachers of the Mysteries of the Gospel, are looked upon, but as vain *Bablers*. But as to the Matter in hand; It seems to many, a thing *incredible*, that God should raise the Dead. (a)

(a) *Acts* 26. 8.

And

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most clearly revealed; and were it not so, yet the most cavilling Athiest, cannot charge the Notion of a *RESURRECTION* with any impossibility.

Where's the *Impossibility* that *Man*, who was once *Dust* becoming *Dust*, shou'd be made *Man* again? What tho' our Bodies after Death loose of their *Consistency* and *Cohesion* of Parts when they crumble into *Dust*, yet that very *Dust* is not lost to God: For the *Creatures*, tho' made out of *Nothing*, must have a *Divine Permission* before they can return to *Nothing* again. So that tho' the Parts of the Body of *Man* be dissolved, they are not lost; God knows where every *Particle* is, and what shou'd hinder, but that he may Rally together, the scatter'd *Dust* of our Bodies, when he pleases. And why shou'd it be thought a more difficult thing to raise the Body out of its own *Materials*, than it was at first to *Create* it out of the *Earth*? The *First Earth*, out of which *Man's Body* was Form'd, was as far from being *Flesh* and *Bones*, as that *Earth* into which our Bodies shall be resolved, after *Death*. * Cannot then, the same Power which made *Flesh* and *Bones*, and raised up a *Humane Body*, out of the primitive *Dust*, raise up our Bodies also out of that *Dust*, into which at *Death*, they shall return.

Thus you see, the Doctrine of the Re-

* See at large Bp. Pearson, on the Article
of the Resurrection.

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urrection is not chargeable with an impossibility, and being so clearly revealed, we fight against the Authority of the Word if we don't believe it.

(7.) *The Eternity of Hell Torments.* Some indulge themselves in *Unscriptural Conceits* of an indemnity for the *Wicked*, after they have passed through a certain *Course of Punishment*; and entertain mistaken Notions of the *Paternal Love* of God, as *tho it Extended it self to all his Creatures, and even the Damned shou'd share in his Fatherly Compassions.* But if such Curious Wits, would be contented to be Wise according to what is Written, they might soon *dislodge* so dangerous an *Opinion*, tending to *Relax* the Reins of *Piety and Vertue*, and to encourage Sinners to a continuance in Sin.

In the 9th of *Mark*, 43, 44 verses, our Lord, (who well knew what the *state* of the Damned was, and of what *Duration*) speaks of Hell-Torments under the notion of *Fire that shou'd NEVER be quenched*; and represents the inward *Dolours* of the *Mind*, and the *Gnawings* of *Conscience*, to a *Worm that NEVER Dieth.* In *Mat.* 25. 46. there the Wicked are said to go away into *EVER-LASTING Punishment*, but the *Righteous into Life Eternal.* The *Eternity of Rewards in Heaven*, and the *Eternity of Punishments in Hell*, are both here Asserted; and we may have as just a Ground to conclude that the *Righteous* shan't be Happy for ever, as that the *Wicked* shan't be Miserable for ever.

So, 2 Theff. 1. 8, 9. *those that know not God, and obey not the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ, shall be punished with EVERLASTING Destruction, from the presence of the Lord, and the Glory of his Power.* And Rev. 20. 10. v. We have (even after the Consummation of all things, when the great Judgment-Day shall Commence) the Ratification of the Sentence of Condemnation upon the Devil and the Beast and the false Prophet, (and by a parity of Reason, all the Wicked in Hell shall be Confirmed in the same state of Condemnation,) *the Devil was cast into the Lake of Fire and Brimstone, where the Beast and the False Prophets are, and shall be Tormented Day and Night, for EVER and EVER.* Thus the Scriptures assert the Eternity of Hell-Torments. And indeed, God is most Equitable and Just in making the Wicked the Subjects of Wrath and Eternal Vengeance: Which will eminently appear if you Consider the Nature of their Crimes, and against whom, which makes them rise in proportion to the Dignity and Majesty of that God, against whom they are Committed: If you Consider their Obstinate adherence here, to a Course of Sin and Rebellion, (notwithstanding their being Threatned with Eternal Punishment) and their Refusals to accept of Eternal Life, in the way it was offer'd: If you Consider their utter incapacity to make Satisfaction to an injured God, and they shan't be discharged till

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till they *have paid the Utmost Farthing.* * And add to all this, the Continuance of their Enmity and Implacable Hatred to God and Holiness, even whilst they under-go his Terroures. There's no Repentance, no Conversion to God in Hell, but as they went out of this World with *Enmity* in their *Hearts* to God, the same *Temper* and *Disposition* they have in another World. His *Wrath* makes them *Rage* and *Blasphe*me, and tho' they could be glad to be eased of their Torment, yet they have no desire to the *Heavenly State*; and are utterly averse to the *Purity* and *Holiness* of it. A state of Misery is the fittest for them, and as there were the *Displays* of the *Highest Justice*, in casting them in to the *Lake of Fire and Brimstone*, so the same Justice doth Gloriously appear in detaining them as *Prisoners* there for *Ever* and *Ever*.

I might Profitably Enlarge upon these hints but it's high time to dismiss this *Third Reason* to vindicate divine Proceedures in ordinary passing by the Wise men after the *Flesh*, since they abuse their *Wisdom* to oppose God in his *Being*, in his *Providence*, and in his *Word*. There are other Reasons that might be urged, which we shall but little more than name.

Fourthly, *The Wise Men after the Flesh* do ordinarily resist, and contemn the outward Call, and Invitations of the *Word*, and there-

* *Mat.* 5. 26.

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fore God is just in denying the inward, special and Effectual Calling.

The *outward Call* is sent *first* as the *Harbinger* to prepare the way for a nearer and closer Application of the *Divine Spirit* to the Soul; But if the *outward Call* be slighted, and resisted, no wonder if there shou'd be a stop put to any further Applications, and if *God* shou'd leave that *Person* to reap the *Fruit* of his own *Folly* and *Obstinacy*. I own, that *God* sometimes won't take a denial at the *Creatures* hand, and tho' the *Offers* of his *Grace* do meet with great contempt for some time, yet he will pursue his blessed *Designs* of *Love*, and Conquer every *Reluctancy* in the carnal *Heart*, and of *Unwilling* make *Willing* in the day of his *Power*; * but if he shou'd act otherwise, and deal with *Persons* according to their *Desert* and *Desire*, and withhold that *Grace*, which they in the *Offer*, refuse; how *Just* and *Righteous* is the *Great God* herein? And this is the *Case* of all that perish under the *Gospel*. *God* calls, but they refuse to hearken, and therefore, if they are *rejected* here, and *condemned* hereafter, they have no reason to complain.

Fifthly, *The Wise Men* after the *Flesh* oftentimes employ their *Wisdom* to ill purposes, to palliate their evil *Practices*, and find out a *Cloak* for their *Sin*. It's very common for

* *Psal.* 110. 3.

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Immoralities in Practice, to be the consequence of *Errors in Judgment*. And he that has employed his *Fleshly Wisdom* to fight against God and those discoveries he has made of *himself* in his *Word*; no wonder, if next he *uses* his *Weapons* in the Quarrel of his Lusts, and stands up in their vindication. Where this is the case how just is the Great God in passing such by. *This is the CONDEMNATION*, (and it is not without sufficient Grounds) *that Light is come into the World, and Men love Darknes rather than Light, because their Deeds were Evil.* John 3. 19.

These things laid together, do sufficiently vindicate the Great God in his Proceedings, in passing by, and not calling many Wise Men after the Flesh. We proceed,

V. and Lastly, *To make some practical Improvement of the whole in a suitable*

A P P L I C A T I O N.

Inf. 1. The Great God seeth not as Man seeth, 1 Sam. 16. 7. The Wise Men after the Flesh, ordinarily stand first in the esteem of Men, but they can't challenge the same respect in the sight of God. Not many Wise Men after the Flesh are alled.

Inf. 2. This may be a Caution to those that fall under the Character of Wise Men after the Flesh, that they rest not in their Wisdom, to their Ruin. They may be un-
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done, and perish, for all their fine Accomplishments, if they trust to these; and have not that true Wisdom and Knowledge that is from above, which is to know God and Jesus Christ whom he has sent. John 17. 3.

There is a Learned, and Useful Profession of Men, whose *Wisdom* is in a restrained sense, a *Wisdom* after the *Flesh*, in regard the *Fabrick* of Man's Body is more particularly the Object of their Science. It is fit I shou'd hint this Caution to them, when the Death of one of their Profession, gave Birth to this Discourse. I could wish that there were less Occasion given, for the Aspersions that this Honourable Profession lieth under; and that it might not be matter of so frequent observation, that the **PHYSITIAN** and the true **CHRISTIAN** do seldom meet together in the same **PERSON**. I doubt not but that there are **THOSE** that are truly *Religious*, and yet on the other hand, the greater Numbers of the *Atheistical, Loose and Immoral*, makes this Caution highly necessary, not to rest in the *Wisdom* of their *Profession*; for this they may have to a very great degree of perfection, and yet perish. Their *Knowledge* may make them very serviceable to others, and yet be undone themselves for lack of *Knowledge*. Their *Wisdom* won't commend them to *God*, and their useful *Capacities* for the Good of Mankind, will leave them short of *Heaven*. I wou'd fain stir up such to an holy *Emulation* and
Zeal

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Zeal for their own Salvation. Was it not a reproach to the *Scribes* and *Pharises* (the Learned among the *Jews*) that *Publicans* and *Sinners*, and those that were of the rude Multitude, entred into the *Kingdom of Heaven*, when they themselves were shut out? And is it not matter of equal reproach to the *Wise* and *Prudent* in our day, to see the *Mean* and the *Base* concern'd about their Salvation, and yet *these* think it not worth their thoughts and care? *Surgunt indocti & rapiunt Cælum* is a great Truth, and Methinks, shou'd tend to inspire into the *Wise Men* after the *Flesh*, a Vigour and Resolution, to obtain that *Kingdom* which others, less knowing than themselves, do yet know thus much, that it is well worth all their Endeavour, Industry and Pains, to obtain and secure.

Inf. 3. How preferable is sound and saving Knowledge to all human Wisdom and outward Accomplishments whatsoever. The *One* will secure Heaven, but the *Other* we may have, and yet perish. Not that therefore *Human Wisdom* is to be despised, or because some abuse their *Wit* and *Parts*, therefore the useful Branches of Knowledge are to be neglected and slighted. We must not chuse to be blind, because some that have their *Eyes* abuse them. But yet true Wisdom and saving Knowledge must have the Preference, and is infinitely better, and of more value.

It is so in *Life*, and it will be so at *Death*.

(1.) It is so in *Life*.

It

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It evidenceth our *Calling*, and will promote our *Communion*; it will encourage *Faith* in God, and Enflame *Love*: It will promote a holy *Fear*, and influence to a sincere *Obedience*.

(2.) At *Death*. Here a divine *Knowledge* will display it's *Excellency* and *Sweetness*; and Administer reviving *Supports*, when all the *Wisdom* of the *Flesh*, and our meer *Moral Acquirements*, will prove but *poor* and *feeble Comforters*. This *Knowledge* will enable the *Christian* to look *Death* in the Face with *Pleasure*. He will behold it as disarmed of it's *Terrour* and *Affrightment*. How did this *Knowledge* make Holy *Job* to triumph, (at the same time that he had the clear Prospects of his tottering *Carkas* crumbling into *Dust*, and being divided into *Morsells* for the *Worms*) *I KNOW* that my *Redeemer* liveth, and that he shall stand at the *latter day* upon the *Earth*, and though after my *Skin Worms* destroy this *Body*, yet in my *Flesh* shall I see *God*. *Job* 19. 25, 26. This *Knowledge* makes the *Christian* with a becoming *Bravery* and *Undauntedness* meet his last *Enemy*, and helps him to Conquer the *Recoils* and *Hesitancies* of *Nature*, and press on with chearfulness through the *Valley of the shadow of Death*, as fearing no *Evil*, having the clear views of a *Blissful* and *Glorious Immortality*.

This is the Priviledg of the **TRUE BELIEVER**, and this was the Case of
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our DECEASED FRIEND. He had his Competency of humane Wisdom, but that which was his *Solace*, and Refreshment in a dying Hour, was the Knowledge that he had of God in the Face of Jesus Christ.

I could greatly Enlarge in his Commendation (could an Invidious Age bear it, wherein *Censure* and speaking ill of others is so much in Fashion:) I might take Notice of those very Useful Gifts, wherewith God had blessed him, for the good of Human Society, and the Remarkable Successes, that attended his Endeavours.

I could speak of his Readiness to serve all, even the poorest, to the Utmost of his Power; and of his great Industry in his Business, whereby he has soon worn out himself in the service of others.

I might take Notice of that Sweetness of Temper, and that Courtous Affability wherein he exceeded most Men; and particularly, of his Tendernefs and Endearing Carriage towards near Relatives. But these were but low Accomplishments, compared with those nobler Endowments, and that richer Anointing he had from on high.

He was a Person that began with God betimes, and that could not rest satisfied with a *Form* of Godliness, but Zealously contended, and reached out after the Power. It was the Thing, not the Name wou'd satisfy him.

He was a Close Walker with God, and enjoyed more than common Communion:

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And had one singular Advantage above many, in that he had a clearer Scheme of Divinity in his Mind, (his Notions of Divine Things were well digested,) and had a fuller insight into Cospel Truths than most attain to. He escaped the *Taint* and *Infection* of the Age, keeping clear of *Deistical* and *Socinianizing* Principles, with which the Minds of many (otherwise) *Wise* and *Prudent*, are Vitiated and Debauched.

He shewed forth his *Faith* (the Truth and Reality of it) by his *Works*. He greatly delighted in *Works* of *Mercy*; and had a great tenderness upon his Spirit, (when he had any under his care, whose cases were attended with dangerous Symptoms) and a wonderful *Sympathy*, and *Fellow-Feeling* with others in their Distress, together with a vigorous Application of Mind to study to do them Service.

He had a Conscientious Regard to the great Duty of *Charity* to the *Poor*; so far, that pursuant of an early Vow, he constantly appropriated a certain *Proportion* of his *Yearly Income*, to be disposed of for Charitable Uses.

And indeed! Such a *Christian*, those that knew him intimately, might discern those Symptoms, that intimate his ripening apace for a better World, and that he was not designed for a long Continuance here.

In his last Sickness, he was very Apprehensive

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prehensive (almost in the Beginning of it) of his approaching Dissolution. However, he was not at all terrified at the thoughts of *Dying*, but for several days lay in a waiting Posture, longing to *Depart* that he might be with *Christ*.

I must, for the honour of the *Free*, and *Rich Grace* of God, and for the encouraging and strengthening the *Faith* and *Hope* of others, acquaint you with some of the *Sweet* and *Gracious* words that proceeded out of his Mouth. I asking him how he did; he replied, *I Bless God, I am without Terrours*, and yet *have not a full Assurance*. However, he expressed the firmest *Reliance* and *Trust* in God through the *Merit* and *Righteousness* of the Blessed Jesus.

He abounded in *Heavenly Ejaculations*, and sometimes *Audible*, and with such *Seriousness* and *Affection* as was unusual. One Morning more especially, expecting his Dissolution was at hand, and yet afraid it should be delayed, I heard him give vent to the inward workings of his Mind, (as near as I can remember) in these very Words. " Divine Father of Beings! Art not thou ready, I am ready: Speak but the word, and thy Servant shall be healed of this *Flesh*.—— I wait for Thee.—Tho' Thou art not slack concerning thy Promise, as some Men count Slackness.— Tho' I see him not, yet THERE He is, and THENCE He will come. Come Lord Jesus, come quickly.

“ Be thou like a young Roe upon the
 “ Mountains of Spices. At another time
 He Breathed forth his Desires thus,
 “ Lord fill my Soul with serious Medita-
 “ tions, suitable to my great Change; so
 “ sudden, so surprizing, and yet I hope so
 “ Glorious.

On the Lord's day Morning before his decease, (having at that time the free and undisturbed Exercise of his Reason, which through the violence of his Distemper, he did not always enjoy) he had a strong desire to join in singing the Praises of his Good God; and accordingly did, with great composure of Mind, and Ardour of Affection, join in singing the 73d Psalm from the 23d to the 27th. At the Conclusion of which Exercise, his Desires were more ardent and strong after being joined to that Assembly where he shou'd sing the Song of Moses and of the Lamb.

Being desired by a Near Relation to take somewhat that was prescribed to him, alledging it wou'd comfort him; he briskly replied, COMFORT! I need none, unless that plain Visitation which I expect so soon as I am Uncloathed. And finding himself under some kind of Impatiency to be gone out of this World, he thus cheek'd himself, to make him the more willing to wait till God shou'd speak the Releasing Word. I have no Pain, no Uneasiness, no Fears, but rather Joys: Let the World scoff, they scoff at they know not what.

This

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This is somewhat of that I had to say that fell within the compass of my own *personal Knowledge*, concerning the *latter End* of this *Righteous Man*. And what should our Desire and Endeavour be but that our *Latter End* (with respect to the Comforts and Triumphs of Faith) *may be like his*. And what a Testimony is this to the *Truth* of Religion; (which should make us more eager in the pursuit of it) when it administers such substantial and real Supports in a dying Hour, and causes the truly pious Soul to pass off the Stage of this World with Triumph and Joy.

I shall conclude all that I have further to add, with a few *Hints* of *Advice* to the sorrowful *Widow* and mournful *Relatives* of our deceased Friend.

1. *Be still, and know that the Lord is God.* Psal. 46. 10. Your Exercise is great, and there is an awfullness in the dispensation, but have a care of *replying against God*. *Be dumb* and not open your Mouths, in Murmurings and undue Complaints.

2. *Cast your Care and Burden upon the Lord, and he shall sustain you.* Psal. 55. 22. He is a Merciful and Faithful God, and will lay upon his Children and People no more than he'll enable them to bear. He has promised a Supply of sufficient *Grace*, and that *his strength shall be made perfect in our Weakness*. 2 Cor. 12. 10.

3. *Hear*

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3. *Hear the Rod and who hath appointed it.* Mic. 6. 9. The Lord is calling loudly, Learn to understand his meaning. *He doth not afflict willingly, nor grieve the Children of Men.**

4. *Be dying daily.* 1 Cor. 15. 31. Be vigorous in the *Mortification* of Sin, and get more *loosened* and *meaned* from the World. You have something less to love the World for (when so valuable a Mercy is removed out of it) and you have something more to prize and value Heaven for. Be preparing to quit and leave this World of *Vanity*, and to pass into a World of *Substance*.

5. *Rejoice in the hope of the Glory of God.* Rom. 5. 2. And keep up a lively sense of the Second Coming of Christ Jesus. Have your *Loyns* girded, and your *Lamps* trimmed. Wait for the *Approaches* of that Jesus, who shall turn your *Weeping* into *Laughter*, and your *Sorrowing* and *Sighing* into *Rejoicing*, and shall put an effectual Period to all your Vexations and Trials, and give you an Eternal Entertainment in his own Presence, *where there is fulness of Joy*, and at his own *Right Hand*, *where there are Pleasures for evermore.* †



Lam. 3. 33. † Psal. 16. 11.

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